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A SKETCH OF THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION. II.¹

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION.

LIKE that of other culturals, the development of religion has proceeded from vague and crude beginnings to its present high, though not yet perfect, state. Though survivals and revivals of older traits, arrest of development, and even regress for limited times or places, have never been lacking, so that nearly every stage of religion can still somewhere be found, yet progress has obtained in more favored cases. A comprehensive statement of the causes of this commanding fact is attempted in the following laws of development, which hold valid for all culturals—since all are but variant expressions of one human mind—but will be here verified only for religion, and as other culturals affect religion, not the converse.

Direct causation.—The predisposing cause of the development of a cultural is the potentiality (constitutive norm or principle) of mankind, and more particularly of a single race, people, or man. This is heredity with variation. The exciting cause of the same is experienced nature and man. This is environment. From their community in these two causes there arises an analogy between all cultural processes.

Indirect causation.—Each cultural stands in solidarity with each other, and therefore promotes its development. This is interaction. Whenever two or more human groups, of various heredities and environments, meet, their mutual comparison, modification, and complementation promote development. This is intercourse.

Traits.—Besides these laws of external causation, there are others of inner change. These are continuity, synthesis, differentiation with unification, and classification.

Man's religious nature—or more specifically, in reference to

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a race, nation, or individual, his heredity with variation—has manifested itself always and everywhere, so that ethnologists now agree that no tribe of man has been found without religion. The inner growth of this man is the ultimate cause implied by the progress of religion, after all other causes have been allowed due weight.

But this religious man has developed always and only in an environment of nature and his fellow-men, both of which have mediated his idea of a God he never saw; for all statements to the opposite effect readily reduce to myth, legend or metaphor. As Leibnitz perceived: "There is nothing in mind that was not previously in sense except the mind itself." Every religion evidences the presence in this "sense" or environment of two proximate sources of religious objects, namely, nature and man, which form the basis respectively of nature-worship and ancestor-worship. Every class of objects in the wide realm of nature has supplied some demon (inferior deity) or deity to worshipping man. Thus, waterworn stones supplied the *phallos* and *kteis*; trees yielded the *sakaki*, the *pipal*, the oak, the peach, the birch, and the mistletoe. Water has seemed divine in countless wells, springs, rivers, and seas. Fire has lacked worshipers in no time or land; while sun and moon, heaven and earth, wind and storm, have generally proved the source of the greatest gods. Lastly, animals, such as the serpent, fox, monkey, cow, jackal, and bear, have freely received divine honors. All these objects were superhuman in some respect or other; that is, could do some things which man could not; and, being construed as super-sensuous—that is, personified—by man, became gods of some or other degree. To them man turned as sources of his food (Hartmann), as causes of the changing world (Peschel), as the indefinitely great—practically the infinite—suggested by semi-intangible things like trees and rivers, or by wholly intangible things like wind and sun (Max Müller), as glorious in beauty, or finally as the recompenser of good and evil.

The factor co-ordinate with nature-worship in the rise and growth of religion was man-worship, whether of ancestors or heroes, or even of living men. Primitive man's explanation of

his supposed temporary absence from the body in dreams was that he had a separable self, called variously a double, shade, image, or breath. He then explained death as the permanent absence of such spirit, and proceeded to maintain relations with it, in which the worshiper made offerings, while the deceased person (supersensuous), now become possessed of superhuman powers, afforded help and protection. When the deceased had been famous in war, invention, learning, or holiness, his cult became public concern and thus hero-worship.

Not only the above-mentioned objects of worship (creed), but also the methods (cult), owe their rise to nature and man. Thus among sacred seasons, the sun's course determined festivals at the winter and summer solstices, and the spring and autumn equinoxes, besides worship at the hours of sunrise, noon, and sunset; while the moon's period of twenty-eight days was divided into a sacred fourteenth and seventh day. At the same time man contributed his life-epochs: birth, puberty, and death; while the hero gave, besides these, the days of his achievements: victory, enlightenment, temptation, etc.

Among sacred places, nature gave the earliest, which were around the sacred tree, well, etc. Offerings to earth-gods were buried, those to heaven-gods were placed on hilltops or burned to ascend in flame. Temples were not provided until later, to shelter idols or symbols of nature-gods or deified heroes. The first sacrificer was the father for the family, and the chief for the tribe. The first sacrifices were food, drink, clothing, and other such articles of human need. After the god had enjoyed the essence or spirit, or received a portion by burial or burning, the remainder was consumed by his worshipers in what thus became a sacred meal and communion. The accompanying prayer, praise, music, and dancing were all equally conformed to the human type. That nature and man should be thus fitted to reveal gods and finally God, and man be thus capacitated to discern him, constitutes God's revelation of himself to man. This organic revelation, to which man owes the very concept of God, precludes all need for a supposed mechanical revelation by angel or miracle.

The distinctive characteristics of the various religions arise from combined heredity and environment. Such are the emphasis on the future life by the Egyptians; the power and inscrutability of the divine among the Babylonians; loftiness and, later, ethical holiness in Jehovah among the Israelites; the duty of co-operation with Ahura Mazda to improve the world among the Persians; ascetic neglect of the world among the Hindus; insistence on the moral providence of Tien by the Chinese; visualization of the divine in beautiful forms, and ennoblement by philosophic reflection, among the Greeks; and, finally, the control of religion by state needs and hierarchical orders among the Romans. Not only peoples, but entire races, have religious characteristics. Thus, the Semites have construed gods predominantly as remote, austere, and self-contained; whereas the Indo-Kelts have emphasized the immanent, genial, and related. The Mongolians approximated the Semites.

The predominant influence of environment appears in the æstheticism that arose in beautiful Greece, and the pessimism in sultry India; but to heredity must be credited the unrivaled philosophic attainments of these related Indo-Keltic peoples.

The development of religion has been promoted by interaction with the other cultural. Thus, in industry, the invention of writing made scriptures possible, and thereby favored the permanence, progress, compass, and diffusion of religious truth.

Again, the growth of knowledge promoted development in religion. It was philosophy that guided to the great reforms of the sixth century B. C., in which the pluralism of the spirits and gods was either ignored or decried, and some one Power made supreme or alone, as was Tao by Laotze, Tien by Kongtze, Karma by Gautama, and Zeus by Zenophanes. The revival of Greek learning conditioned the Reformation, and the universities cradled it; and ever since that time science has not failed to correct and interpret religion. Physics and chemistry banished magic, medicine displaced exorcism, and psychology and logic exposed divination. Copernicus and Newton vastly extended the meaning of the omnipresence of God, as did Darwin and Spencer that of his eternity. The new "religion of science" is justified in that

it is simply religion in the making, the interpreting new science as new revelation. During the last half-century hierology has disarmed, by its theory of development, both the anti-religious rationalism and the anti-scientific dogmatism of the eighteenth century. This development theory reveals the essential content of religion in its changing forms, and the hidden truth in its crude but vivid symbols and myths; and thus enables the Christian both to grant relative truth and value to lower faiths and to seek to perfect his own.

Fine art, whether visual or audible, has advanced religion to an unsuspected degree. The rough and vague nature-gods were humanized by the idols, symbols, and pictures made to represent them, the temples made to house them, and the music, dance, and drama to entertain them. Greek statues of a Zeus, an Apollo, or an Athena were fashioned as presentments of the divine, were worshiped as idols, and therefore reflected their consummate beauty back upon the gods. Votaries left the chryselephantine idol of Zeus fashioned by Pheidias for the Olympian temple, feeling that they had seen the god; and idealized pictures of Jesus Christ still powerfully promote the religious spirit. Tissot's unique life of the Lord Jesus Christ in picture distinctly aids both credence of its historical truth and grasp of its central significance. Progressing literature and music have likewise given ever nobler expression to religion, and have thus advanced religion itself.

No one will doubt that ideals of conduct, whether as morality or law, have contributed to both the creed and the cult of the gods. The concept of the earliest gods reflected the earliest morality, and consequently some showed cruelty or lust. As humanity improved, such gods as Zeus and Krishna became objects of criticism, and were either corrected into nobler types, as was done in Greece, or vindicated by elaborate apology, as in India. Other gods with better mythical implications, like Tien, Agni, Jahve, and Apollo, were gradually transformed from the nature to the moral type, as their worshipers themselves improved. The earlier crude and vague belief in continued existence after death was likewise transformed under the influ-

ence of morality into that of retribution after death, and metempsychosis was moralized in the same way. In religious cult it was morality that prompted the change from ceremonial to moral purity as a condition of approach to deity. The Romans showed the influence of law in their dominant conception of *religio* as a bond to the gods releasable on precise conditions. National changes have also influenced religion, because they were attributed to the attitude of the god, as when Jupiter became Optimus and Maximus over his rivals among the Latin tribes, and when the national experiences of Judah led it from monolatry to monotheism. The conformation of God to the moral ideal is so complete in Christianity that an easy error now identifies morality with religion.

Not only have industry, knowledge, art, and conduct promoted the development of religion, but arrest or growth under their influence will decide the fate of the now extant faiths. It appears from this interplay of forces that "God fulfils himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

The combined effect of these cultural, co-operating with the inner growth of religion, has been to develop its consciousness of God to ever nobler terms of personality. This divine personality can differ from the human only in degree of perfection, which with the monotheistic god amounts to infinite or absolute. When we *worship*, we attribute idealized human *worth* to the God that is Infinite Person or Absolute Spirit. That our discovery of God was mediated by nature and man, and its growth promoted by other cultural, affords no ground for reducing the notion of God to any of these terms. God can be identified neither with nature, as the pantheist B. Spinoza and the materialist D. F. Strauss would do; nor with humanity, as the positivist Auguste Comte desired; nor is religion devotion to science, as J. R. Seeley claims; nor is it the "creation of the spirit" by the same imagination that produces art, as Albert Lange held; nor, finally, is it "ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling," as Matthew Arnold taught. No; religion is unique; is, like beauty, its own excuse for being, and may not be transformed into a superhuman conscience or anything else.

Intercourse among various human groups has promoted religious growth in three ways. Comparison has afforded a superior religion increased confidence in itself; modification of a religion has resulted from its introduction among another people; and complementation of one religion has been supplied by another.

The first trait or inner law of development is continuity, which requires, to use the language of Wilhelm von Humboldt, that "men always connect on from what lies at hand." Each step in progress is as requisite to the next as it is in a walk; and nature never forgets the law, though the visionary reformer often does. Accord with this law demands that the origin of a doctrine or ritual be traced along its entire course until it vanishes into the prehistoric. Continuity is so inescapable that even so-called founders of religion have achieved their tasks only by reforms of what preceded them.

Synthesis requires that, when any thesis exceeds its proper limits, antithesis shall arise, and the two finally unite into a synthesis. This last may in turn become a thesis, and so on indefinitely. Thus, the inevitable tendency of monachism, whether Buddhist, Moslem, or Christian, is to react into license. It is for this reason that the notion of a mean or middle has proved so general a favorite, *e. g.*, with Kongtze, Gautama, and the Greek author of *medan agan*, "too much of nothing." Synthesis has shown itself mainly in the important and world-wide modality, which results from excessive activity of either one of the three mental functions in relation to the other two. The religious mode of sacerdotalism, legalism, or moralism arises from an overbalance by action or volition; the mode of rationalism arises from an overbalance by intellection; and the mode of evangelicism, pietism, or mysticism from overbalance by emotion. The order just given—namely, legalism for thesis, rationalism for antithesis, and mysticism for synthesis—holds true for all ethnic religions; but universal religions that begin at antithesis, as did Buddhism, or at synthesis, as did Christianity, will react to the others in due course. Perfection obviously lies in a stable balance, within the religion, sect, or individual, of all three mental functions; but this can be only approximately

realized. All existing religions, both ethnic and universal, contain all three modes; the toleration by each mode for the others is a needed and safe compromise. Mysticism is probably the religious mode pre-eminent; and those gifted for it are especially likely to raise doubts in the minds of other modists as to their own religious validity, as did Laotze with Kongtze, and Hinduism with Brahmanism.

Differentiation with unification of quality between religions also characterizes development. Savage and barbarian religions differ as little as do their stone implements or music. Progressive peoples, on the contrary, have reached differentiation of religion in two degrees. First and chiefly by migrating to separate countries, as did the tribes composing the three historic races (Mongolians, Semites, and Indo-Kelts), since this involved differences in all the causes of development, whether of direct or indirect causation. The various ethnic religions, such as Shintoism and Brahmanism, as well as the universal religions arose in this way. A second and less degree of differentiation arose from the same causes without local separation, as seen in the numerous sects alike of Shintoism, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Islamism, and Christianity. For example, Hinduism, Islamism, and Christianity alike have divided on the subject of freedom of man to salvation, in interaction with the cultural or philosophic knowledge. Later on, men tire of differences and a unification sets in, which need not be the original sameness, but harmony in a larger system. In this manner arise associations, unions, alliances, and the like.

An inevitable result of development is various stages, and these constitute the best means for the classification of religions. Hierologists differ only as to the fittest marks of these stages. Hartmann prefers natural and redemptive; Siebeck, natural, moral, and redemptive; Réville, polytheistic and monotheistic; Tiele and Saussaye, natural and ethico-spiritual; while Whitney and Menzies prefer tribal, national, and universal, which is probably the best choice. But all such divisions are inexact, for the groups both overlap each other and contain differences in themselves. The national or moral religions extant are Shintoism, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Jainism, Parseeism, and

Judaism; while the universal or redemptive religions are Islamism, Buddhism, and Christianity. The differences between the last group are especially marked. Whereas Islamism is sensuous, and Buddhism is, at least negatively, ascetic, Christianity accords due recognition to both earth and heaven, for while earth can never satisfy, heaven can never become more than a blessed hope. Again, Islamism became universal only by force; Buddhism holds exclusive rule only over Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, and Nepal, all which are decadent nations; whereas Christianity sways the great powers of the world. The religious principles of Christianity are the highest and its force, consequently, the greatest attainable; but both still await correct adjustment to man by science, especially sociology, which has wisely been introduced into the curricula of our theological seminaries. The religion of the future calls, not for rejection of Christianity, but for its more intimate interaction with the other cultural, and for continuation of that inner self-criticism and self-correction the capacity for which Christianity possesses above all other faiths.

Finally, no hierologist supposes that religion will ever perish from among men. Religion makes man at home in the world of which God is the Father, and thereby supplies his greatest need as a finite being. That were a dreadful place where God is not, but the great Companion will never die. The Lord's Prayer expresses this central idea of religion with such incomparable simplicity, purity, and nobility that it constitutes both the best creed and the best cult whose destiny to final acceptance by mankind seems assured.

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